

Press of Atlantic City

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Brigantine beach project pushed back

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BRIGANTINE - City beachgoers won't be cramped this month by a planned beach-replenishment project after all - due to storm damage in Florida.

City Engineer Ed Stinson said the replenishment project, which was scheduled to begin setting up Aug. 15, will be delayed by about a month to six weeks because the dredging vessel designated for the project is still working in Florida.

"Apparently there are several replenishment projects in Florida and the storms that have gone through there have damaged those projects," Stinson said. "That means we are being pushed back."

Hurricane Dennis hit the Florida panhandle in July and other storms also have swept through the region.

The delay, however, will not endanger Brigantine's federal funding for its \$4.5 million replenishment project.

"Since the storm was a federally declared event, we're not going to be hurt," Stinson said. "We were trying to make a tight timeline to end the project by September when the government's fiscal year ends. But we had already received a notice to proceed, so the delay will be taken into account."

The city, as well as the Army Corps of Engineers, wanted to finish the project before replenishment funds are cut in the next federal budget.

The first phase of the plan was scheduled to begin this month, with actual dredging to begin in September. The city has already delayed the project to accommodate protected piping plover nests on the city's north end. The birds have now fledged and the protected beaches will reopen Aug. 12, officials said.

Stinson said that the project will likely now start in October.

The plan calls for replenishment of 1.8 miles of beach starting at the city's northern sea wall and running to about 14th Street. The cost of the project will be split between federal, state and city funding.

In other business, City Council on Wednesday swore in Lynn Sweeney as the new city clerk. Sweeney has held the position since about the beginning of the year on an interim basis.

City officials praised her and the job she has done.

"Rarely does a week go by when a resident or visitor fails to call me to compliment Lynn for some type of assistance she has given to them," said Jim Barber, city manager.

Sweeney is a native of Brigantine and began working for the city in 1999.

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